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NINTH CHEETAH DIES AT MADHYA PRADESH'S KUNO NATIONAL PARK

Dhatri (formerly Tbilisi), one of the female felines brought from Namibia, was found dead in the park on Wednesday morning

DEATHS SETBACK TO PROJECT CHEETAH

The back-to-back deaths are a setback to Project Cheetah, under which a total of 20 animals were imported from Namibia and South Africa to the KNP. Since March, six of these adult cheetahs have died due to various reasons. In May, three of the four cubs born to a female Namibian cheetah had also succumbed to extreme heat. The surviving cub is being hand-raised for future wilding | P10

OFFICIAL POINTS TO ARTHROPOD ASSAULT

- Cheetah Project Steering Committee chairman Rajesh Gopal said the death could be on account of ectoparasites or blood-sucking arthropods such as ticks. "The collar may have aggravated the wound," he added
- Other experts involved in the cheetah reintroduction project believe heavy rains, extreme heat, and humidity may have also contributed to the deaths

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CHEETAHS KEPT IN AN ENCLOSURE IN KUNO TO CONSTANTLY MONITOR THEIR HEALTH

CHENNAI • MADURAI • VIJAYAWADA • BENGALURU • KOCHI • HYDERABAD • VISAKHAPATNAM • COIMBATORE • KOZHIKODE • THIRUVANANTHAPURAM • BELAGAVI • BHUBANESWAR • SHIVAMOGGA • MANGALURU • TIRUPATI • TIRUCHY • TIRUNELVELI • SAMBALPUR • HUBBALLI • DHARMAPURI • KOTTAYAM • KANNUR • VILLUPURAM • KOLLAM • TADEPALLIGUDEM • NAGAPATTINAM • THRISSUR • KALABURAGI

SITs to probe 44 cases of violence

Flames rise from shops set ablaze in Gurugram on Tuesday night | PTI

Three-member panel formed to scan social media posts to look for inflammatory material

HARPREET BAJWA @Chandigarh

SPECIAL Investigation Teams (SITs) will be formed to probe 44 cases of communal violence registered in Nuh and Gurugram, the Haryana Police said two days after the riots.

The toll went up to six on Wednesday as Bajrang Dal functionary Pradeep Sharma (32) succumbed to the injuries at Delhi's Safdarjung Hospital. In all, 116 people have been arrested so far. Director General of Police P K Agrawal said, "If there was any conspiracy, it will also be investigated and the guilty will not be spared."

As for Bajrang Dal member and alleged cow vigilante Monu Manesar, his role in the clashes is being probed, the police said. Rumour of his presence at Monday's VHP procession was the alleged trigger for the riots.

Manesar is an accused in the killing of two Muslim men in February last. Haryana Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar said the Rajasthan Police was free to act against Manesar.

Nuh and Gurugram remained tense but peaceful. Curfew in Nuh was relaxed for two hours though most people chose not to step out of home.

The state government formed a three-member panel to scan all social media platforms from 21-31 July to check for inflammatory posts, Haryana home minister Anil Vij said.

To prevent future flare-ups, the police decided to permanently deploy an India Reserve Battalion comprising around 1,000 personnel at Nuh. Also, the Police Enforcement Bureau will be given the responsibility of cow protection in Nuh.

In the Supreme Court, a special bench of justices Sanjiv Khanna and S V Bhati allowed the VHP to hold protest rallies but asked the Delhi, UP and Haryana governments to ensure there is no hate speech. P9

NUH SCARE FOR JUDGE, HER 3-YEAR-OLD

The car of Additional Chief Judicial Magistrate Anjali Jain was among those that were attacked during the communal violence at Nuh on Monday, reports *Ujwal Jalali*. Her three-year-old daughter was along with her when a mob stoned the car near the Nuh bus stand. All occupants of the car stepped out and hid in a nearby workshop from where some advocates rescued them. The next day they found the charred remains of their vehicle, their FIR said.

Dissent in Congress: Govt keeps 211 cops' transfer in abeyance

DEVARAJ B HIREHALLI @Bengaluru

TRANSFER of police officers seems to have become a big issue for the state government now. The government, which issued three orders in 24 hours, eventually kept in abeyance the final order transferring 211 police inspectors.

Incidentally, the issue came to the fore when the Congress high command was holding a meeting of its leaders from Karnataka in New Delhi on Wednesday.

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah and his cabinet colleagues, including Home Minister G Parameshwara, attended the meeting.

This is likely to give more ammunition to opposition BJP and JDS which have already raised the issue of cash for transfer. Around 9 pm on Tuesday, the order to transfer 211 inspectors was issued. Trouble started brewing when some Congress leaders expressed their dissent.

The first order stalled the transfer of Vajramuni K from Bomb Detection and Disposal Squad (BDDS), Bengaluru, to City Market; Anil Kumar HD from Begur to Malleswaram; Edwin Pradeep S from High Court Vigilance to Jigani; and Jagadish R from Ulsoor Gate to Kumaraswamy Layout. That followed two more orders in which the transfer of 11 and eight officers, respectively, was kept in abeyance.

According to sources, some of these officers, who mostly got the postings in and around Bengaluru, have the backing of the Siddaramaiah camp. This did not go well with the DK Shivakumar camp.

Following instructions from the government, the police department informed the officers concerned not to hand over or take charge until further orders. CONTINUED ON: P4

No apology for Modi surname remark, Rahul tells top court

SHRUTI KAKKAR @New Delhi

REITERATING that he would not apologise for the 'Modi' surname remark that led to his disqualification from the Lok Sabha, Congress leader Rahul Gandhi told the Supreme Court that using criminal process and its consequences under the Representation of the People's Act to arm-twist him into doing so is abuse of law.

"The petitioner maintains and has always maintained that he is not guilty of the offence and if he had to apologise and compound the offence, he would have done it much earlier. Using the criminal process and the consequences under the Representation of the People's Act to arm twist the petitioner into apologising for no fault, is gross abuse of the judicial process and ought not to be countenanced," Rahul said in his counteraffidaviti.

Complainant Purnesh Modi had in his affidavit alleged that Rahul's statement was made out of personal hatred for Prime Minister Narendra Modi. He said Rahul had shown arrogance rather than being apologetic about the scurrilous words he used maliciously and recklessly.

In his affidavit, Rahul argued that there is no community or samaj on record going by the name 'Modi'. Hence, the offence of defaming the Modi community as a whole would not arise as people having the surname Modi may fall into different communities/ castes.

CHENNAI CENTRAL

Natural ACT as hockey returns to its home after 5,661 days

SWAROOP SWAMINATHAN @Chennai

INTERNATIONAL hockey returns to the city after a gap of 5,661 days. The last match the city hosted—also at the Mayor Radhakrishnan Stadium in Egmore—came on January 31, 2008, when Belgium beat India 3-2 in the last of the five-match bilateral series before the team departed for an Olympic qualifier in Chile. That drought will be broken at 4.00 pm on Thursday when South Korea face Japan in the first match of the seventh edition of the Asian Champions Trophy (ACT).

The Tamil Nadu government has been on a mission to host international events in the state. To get back hockey, a delegation had travelled to Odisha during the World Cup earlier this year. When the idea of hosting the ACT was mooted, it didn't face much of a hindrance. To host the event, the MRK Stadium has undergone a sea change. A practice turf has come up (a prerequisite), the stadium itself has received several new coats of paint, the main turf has been re-laid to meet elite-level standards. The total cost of the project is believed to be around ₹20 crore.

One day out, it was hard to miss the beehive of activity in and around the stadium. The Gandhi-Irwin Road that houses the venue has seen new hockey-themed murals come up. The smell of fresh paint is still lingering in the air. Bomman (the mascot, named after one of the protagonists in the Oscar-winning Elephant Whisperers) is ever-present.

V Baskaran, India's Olympic-winning captain from 1980, is happy that the sport is coming back to a place that has a huge fan following. The city has another reason to cheer. When they sing the anthems before pushback against China, S Karthi will be among the players. The young forward is the only TN player in the team. The newly spruced up venue and, Karthi, may be the faces of a new birth. P13

Indian hockey team at MRK Stadium in Chennai on Wednesday | P RAVIKUMAR

Format: Six teams, one group, round-robin format. The top four teams after the round-robin stage advance to the semifinals

Teams: India, Pakistan, China, Malaysia, Japan, South Korea

EXPRESS READ

SC starts hearing on abrogation of Article 370

New Delhi: A five-judge constitution bench of the Supreme Court on Wednesday commenced hearing a batch of pleas challenging the Centre's decision to abrogate Article 370 in Jammu and Kashmir. The bench asked the lead counsel of the petitioners as to how can a provision that was mentioned as temporary in the Constitution, become permanent after J&K constituent assembly came to an end in 1957 | P10

Status quo on GST on online gaming

New Delhi: The GST Council on Wednesday decided to retain 28% GST rate on online gaming, casinos and horse racing on the face value of bets despite Delhi, Goa and Sikkim expressed their dissent. The 28% tax on these items will be effective from October 1, and the Council will review its decision six month after it comes into effect, Finance Minister Niramala Sitharaman said on Wednesday | P12

RECORD DELUGE

Residents evacuated on rubber boats in northern China's Hebei province, south of Beijing on Wednesday. China's capital region has witnessed its heaviest rains in 140 years, leaving 21 dead and many missing in flooding | AP | P11

NIMHANS operating without registration since 2017

S LALITHA @Bengaluru

THE Karnataka State Mental Health Authority (KSMHA) issued a directive to country's premier mental health institute NIMHANS on Tuesday asking it to take urgent steps to produce a permanent certificate of registration, according to government sources.

It has not obtained the certificate as a mental health establishment as mandated under the Mental Healthcare Act of 2017. "With countless neuro surgeries being performed here on a daily basis, it is a serious lapse that NIMHANS is yet to be registered as a mental health establishment under the Act," said a source. What is worse is that NIMHANS attempted to seek exemption from registration, but did not succeed, he said.

Explaining the enormity of the issue, he said the chairperson of Mental Health Review Board for Bangalore and Mysore Division, Niyaz Ahmed S Dafedar, retired district judge of Bengaluru, in a letter on August 1, 2023 to Dr Pratima Murthy, Director and senior professor of psychiatry, NIMHANS, accused the institute of providing contradictory information about its registration process to the Authority through a series of written explanations.

The Review Board issued it a show cause notice on October 19, 2022, seeking an explanation for non-registration.

In a letter on November 2, 2022, NIMHANS informed the Authority that it had sought exemption from the Central Mental Health Authority (CMHA) from registration under Section 65(2) of Mental Health Care Act of 2017. P5

RACIST BARB

Araga draws flak for remarks against Kharge

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @Bengaluru/Shivamogga

FORMER Home Minister Araga Jnanendra on Wednesday came under fire from Congress leaders for his remarks against AICC president Mallikarjun Kharge. While Congress sought legal action against him for his "insensitive" comment, Jnanendra expressed regret and claimed he had not taken Kharge's name.

During a protest against the Kasturirangan committee report at Thirthahalli in Shivamogga on Tuesday, Jnanendra referred to Forest Minister Eshwar Khandre, who hails from Bidar, and said, "Unfortunately, most ministers are from north Karnataka. They don't know anything about plants, trees or shelter. They have a tanned complexion because of the scorching sun. You can observe this if you see Kharge. Only his hair protects him from the scorching sun."

As the video of his statement went viral on Wednesday, the Congress leaders targeted Jnanendra. They said by making such remarks, Jnanendra exposed his as well as his party's (BJP) love for Manu's Varnashrama and mentality towards the oppressed.

Stating that Jnanendra had insulted the "daivas" (demigods in Tulu culture) in the past, the Congress leaders said, "Now, he has insulted the people of north Karnataka, Dalits and senior Congress leader Kharge." CONTINUED ON: P4

Fresh tension over mass burial site of Kuki-Zos

PRASANTA MAZUMDAR @Guwahati

THE site of the mass burial of 35 bodies of Kuki-Zo tribals on Thursday has set off fresh tension in Manipur, prompting the government to beef up security.

"A programme to honour 35 Kuki-Zo martyrs will take place tomorrow (Thursday) in the Peace Ground, Tuibuong, Lamka (Churachandpur), followed by a burial ceremony at S Boljang village near Haolai Khopi," the Indigenous Tribal Leaders' Forum (ITLF) said.

The ITLF said the burial site, S Boljang, falls under Kuki-majority Churachandpur district.

However, the Coordinating Committee on Manipur Integrity claimed the site is Torbung, which falls under the Meitei-majority Bishnupur district. It said the burial "at the evicted areas of Meitei villages" would not only provoke the sentiments of the people on both sides but would also remain as a symbol of enmity between the two neighbouring villages forever.

The bodies are currently lying at the morgue of a hospital in Churachandpur district.

'MOTHER OF EARTH' CENTRE

Dr Vivek Murthy's pet project to come up at Mandya

K SHIVA KUMAR @Mysuru

US Surgeon General Vivek Murthy's family has come up with a project to build "Mother of Earth", a spiritual centre, at his native village of Hallegere in Mandya district.

Called as "symbol of unity", the project will be the first of its kind in the world as anybody from any part of the globe can connect and relate to it. The facility will come up on 12 acres of land at a cost of Rs 70 crore.

Funded by SCOPE Foundation, the project will have an 11-foot tall statue of "Mother Earth" to be carved out of a single piece of rock. It will be embedded with blue granite and whitestone as signs of water and waves.

Hallegere Lakshmi Narashima Murthy, father of Dr Murthy, has approached renowned sculptor Arun Yogiraj, who sculpted Subash Chandra Bose's statue, to take up the statue work. Leading architects and designers will also be roped in to implement the project. The spiritual centre will also have 64 statues of philosophers from Socrates to Swami Vivekananda.

Narashima Murthy held meetings and interacted with volunteers of the foundation spread in 13 countries. They have decided to invite former US president Barack Obama and his wife Michelle Obama to the ground-breaking ceremony to be held by December-end.

The foundation has plans to invite Tibetan spiritual leader Dalai Lama to lay the foundation stone of the Yoga and Meditation Sathwik Centre which will come up on eight acres of land. A walkathon to popularise the "Mother of Earth" concept will be inaugurated by Jill Biden, the first lady of the US, and Vice-President Kamala Harris in Washington DC on September 10. Similar events will be held in other cities abroad, Narashima Murthy said.

"Our family has funded several charity activities. Since the whole project needs around Rs 100 crore, we may approach some donors," he said.

SCOPE Foundation works for needy kids

SCOPE Foundation also conducts eye and dental camps and extends scholarships to needy children across the country